Development of Sanctuaries in A.P.

5. SHRI MENTAY PADMANABHAM : Will the MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is any proposed to develop some sanctuaries in Andhra Pradesh in the Eastern Ghat hills;

(b) whether Government of Andhra Pradesh has submitted any proposals for developing some sanctuaries;

(c) whether Government are giving any encouragement and financial assistance to State Governments to identify and develop wildlife sanctuaries; and

(d) if so, the details thereof.

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH) : (a) and (b) The power to declare any area as a wildlife sanctuary vests with the State Government. At present there are only three Wildlife Sanctuaries in the Eastern Ghat region of Andhra Pradesh, i.e. Papiknoda, Venkateswara and Lankamalleshwara.

(c) and (d) Wildlife Institute of India after survey of all the biogeographic regions of the country has identified the potential areas representing various biogeographic zones in the country. This report proposes setting up of four more sanctuaries in Eastern Ghat region of Andhra Pradesh, i.e. Velikonda, Donubhavi, Gudem Marripakala and Anantgiri. The State Government of Andhra Pradesh has been requested to declare areas identified in the report as sanctuaries.

Financial assistance is provided for development of the notified sanctuaries on scientific lines.

Felling of Forest Trees in the Country

6. SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news item appearing in the "Hindustan Times" dated the 4th June, 1992 to the effect that inspite of millions of rupees having been spend on forests every years, the indiscriminate felling of forest trees is going on in the country; and

(b) if so, what steps Government are taking to preserve the forest from complete degradation ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Government of India have taken a number of steps to preserve and protect the forests from degradation :

(1) The National Forest Policy 1988 lays emphasis on environmental stability & maintenance of ecological balance. The derivation of direct economic benefit must be subordinated to this principal aim. Besides, there are specific provisions to regulate grazing, control of fire and encroachment.

(2) The Forest Conservation Act 1980 was enacted to check indiscriminate diversion of forest lands for non forestry purposes. The Act has been made more stringent by an amendment in 1988.

(3) The Government of India have been providing Central assistance to State Govt. for conservation of forests under the Scheme "Development of Infrastructure for Protection of Forests against Biotic Interference".

(4) The Government of India have also started financial assistance to State Govts. for protection of forests against fire under the scheme 'Modern Forest Fire Control Methods'.

(5) The Government of India have also issued a circular on 1st June, 1990 to encourage people's active participation in development and protection of degraded forests.

(6) Guidelines have been issued to State/UT Govts. from time to time for